

AN INSIGHT INTO E-COLLECTIONS

By

Dr. ANGELINE SHEBA ALBERT

Lecturer in Commerce,
Women's Christian College, Nagercoil.

A. JOHNSON NAVARAJ,

Librarian (S.G.)
Govt. Polytechnic College, Nagercoil.

ABSTRACT

The present paper gives brief introduction about E-collections. It discusses the e-books, e-journals, utility, features, advantages and issues for the development of e-collections. e-books will offer a rich learning experience, reinforced with audio, video, 3D animation and collaborative learning tools. e-journals on the other hand are electronic publications, published on regular basis. This paper highlights the future role in e-collection development in respective environment.

INTRODUCTION

The traditional means of disseminating information has gone through a radical change. It started with the invention of paper and then the printing press in 15th century that the way for the printed books. With the advent of personal computers, desktop publishing software and laser printers in the late eighties revolutionized the printing to a newer phase. The internet and Web publishing of the nineties added fuel for the growth of dissemination of information through electronic means. While traditional printed books take the form of electronic version, there are books, which are digitally born, i.e. they are available only in electronic form. The computer and communication technologies have drastically changed the entire world including collections. Presently, with the use of these technologies institutions / professional associations and societies are bringing out various publications in the form of e-collections for the benefit of users. This paper provides an outline of e-books, e-journals and the trends.

Features of E-collections:

The major key features of e-collections are the following:

- Less bulky than paper
- Globalised reach'
- Easily copied, stored and disseminated

- Easy to revise, manipulate and merge
- Users can use the same e-resources at the same time at any place.
- Speedy delivery
- Add value to services
- Interaction with remote users
- Users tracking on line
- Generate satisfaction among users
- The e-collections save user's time
- Buying and selling of e-collections is available on world wide web.
- E-collections enhance the R & D effectively and efficiently.

Types of E-collections:

The paper mainly focuses on two types of e-collections: e-books and e-journals

E-books :

Electronic books or e-books are books in computer file format and can be read on all types of computers and handheld devices designed specifically for reading e-books. E-books also contain audio, video and dynamic hyperlinks. E-books can be delivered by e-mail as an attachment or downloaded from the internet. E-books on

diskette or CD ROM are sent by postal mail or sold in book stores.

e-book, just like any other book has cover art, a title page, an ISBN, a copy right notice, an editor and publisher. However, e books come with some enhancements such as historical novel, accompanied by music of that period, children's book with sound effects, animation or video or a reference book with the most current information, active hyperlinks and simulation capabilities. The e-book data starts its 'life' as a plain text or text marked up in HTML. It is converted through a software based translator into a readable and displayable format by the e book hardware.



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- Font size can be changed suitably
- Buying e Books, the overhead charges are totally ruled out.
- Some e books are interactive with background music and animations.
- e Books save library space and expenditure on binding.
- Save human resources for shelving and users cannot misplace e Books.

e Books Reader :

e Books can be read on desk top computers, lap top computers, personal digital assistants and handheld e Book reading devices such as the Pocket e Book or soft Book reader. e Books come in many file formats, such as HTML, PDF, RTF, Windows CE, or files specifically for reading devices. Some file formats require e Book reading software, often available as a free download. One can even print out a few pages or chapters to read.

Handheld reading devices offer many e Book-reading advantages over other computers. e Book reading devices are designed specifically for reading books. The devices use page-turning systems rather than scrolling and use touch screen technology for searching book marking, highlighting and annotating. Screens are backlit and usually about the size of a paper back book.

e Book reading software is used on the computer. The advantage of a e Book reading software is better on-screen reading quality and library management of the e-

books such as search, book marking and annotating.

'Readius' a pocket size e-reader is aimed at business professionals those who are unwilling to sacrifice readability and mobility. Full colour e-book reader shows full colour pictures.



'Readius' pocket size E-reader

Publishers are analyzing the viability of mobile handsets for use as e Book platform. The technology, of course, already exists, and storing and reading large volumes of text is possible on most of today's mid-range and high end handsets.

Users of e Books :

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- Travellers who are on the move, load e Books on their portable computers and handhelds without adding weight or taking up space in their luggage.

Where to find e Books ?

e Books are sold from e-publishers and online bookseller sites. Downloads range from \$3 on the lower end and upwards of \$ 24.95 on the high end. They are delivered either by download or email file attachment. Print publishers often price their downloadable e books at the hard cover price; electronic publishers often use paper

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Some downloadable e Books are sold with soft locks a software that allows one to view portions of the e Books, before buying it. Softlock works with PDF files. e Books on diskette or CD-ROM are sold from the e publisher web sites, on line book sellers, and at physical book stores. Public libraries also carry diskettes and CD-ROMs and a few are testing downloads using e Book reading devices or digital libraries.

E-Journals

E-Journals are electronic publications, published on a regular basis such as weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually. Generally, e-journals are grouped as under :

- An electronic edition of a journal that is also available in print.
- An electronic journal that is solely available in internet
- Commercial full text journals as well as freely available ones

Who publishes e-journals ?

Many groups publish e-journals, from small organizations with a single publication to large publishing houses offering many titles. Some of the larger e-journal publishers are listed below :

Academic Press, Black well, Science, CRC Press, Elsevier, Highwire, JSTOR Project Muse, OCLC Electronic Journals, online springer and verlag. The Electronic journal miner only lists e-journals and other online serials that are available from publishers or directly from their producer. Many electronic journals are found in aggregations. (eg. EBscohost Gale Info Trac). These may be found by using Gold Rush (<http://goldrush.coalliance.org>) a system produced by the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries that lists serials embedded within other aggregations or data bases.

Growth of e-journals

Internet has enabled the publishing task much more easier and faster. Publishing world is one, which has had more effects, compared to any other field, since the introduction of internet. The number of e-journals is growing fast year by year. The directory of electronics journals, news letters and academic discussion lists brought out by association of Research libraries publishing gives a clear picture about the growth of e-journals. The figures clearly identify that internet has been accepted by many publishers to reach out the end users.

Factors to be considered while formulating e-collections strategy:

It is essential for the Librarians in the area of science and technology to formulate strategic policy for the development of e-collections. On the basis of experience and literature review, the following major factors may be taken into account while formulating e-collections strategy:

- Who may have access to the content? Members of the library only?
- Content can be copied into courseware ILL or publications?
- Will cost be based on a fixed fee or related to annual usage?
- Will usage be limited to a fixed number of terminals, or a number of simultaneous users?
- Capacity and need for investing in electronic content creation.
- Guidelines for developing collaborations for content creation.
- How to ensure the quality in electronic collections?
- Cost benefit
- Licensing and users tracking

- Periodic evaluation of e-collections
- Training support for users and staff.

Evaluation of E-Collections

E-Collection development is an on-going process which requires various initiatives on the part of individual and institutions involved in the process of e-collections. The following factors may be kept in view while evaluating the e-collections:

- The scope of the e-collections should be related to the aims, objectives, activities, programmes and priorities of institutions.
- The content features are essentially needed to be accurate, authoritative, latest and useful.
- Adequate dynamic links to other resources.
- Quality of presentation of subject matter.
- Graphic, multimedia design and effect.
- Periodical updates
- User friendliness
- Easy searching and downloading of text.

Role for Librarians in E-collections:

There is no doubt about the key role needed on the part of current librarians and the staff of Science & Technology Libraries in India. In this regard, Stephen Pinfield highlights the role of librarians in his paper entitled "Managing Electronic Library Services; current issues in U.K. higher education institutions":

- Multi media user: comfortability with a wide range of formats.
- Intermediary: with a good knowledge of sources and user requirements.
- Enabler: proactively connecting users with information they require.
- Metadata producer: creating records of information sources in a variety of schemes.

- Communicator: Formally and informally connected with users.
- Team player: working with colleagues in library, IT services and academics.
- Trainer / Educator: taking on a formal role to teach information skills and information literacy.
- Evaluator: for resources on behalf of users.
- Negotiator : dealing with publishers and suppliers.
- Project Manager: leading on development Projects to enhance the services
- Innovator: not just following the routine but also looking at improved ways to deliver the services.
- Fund raiser: Working for greater income for the institution.

Conclusion

To meet the user needs in the world of digital information, libraries must revise their policies and their way of working. Print and electronic information sources are likely to co-exist for sometime to come, although there will likely be major changes in the scientific publishing sector. As information is increasingly produced in digital artifact form., paper collections will slowly fall into disuse and large portions of such collections will be warehoused at remote locations, libraries will continue to be associated with buildings. Although physical locations of books, journals and other materials will no longer consume valuable

space in these buildings, we can envision the need for work spaces where users consult state of the computer work stations.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Angeline Sheba Albert is 42 years and is a Post Graduate and M.Phil in Commerce and also a Graduate in Library & Information Science from Madurai Kamaraj University. Ph.D in Business Administration (Commerce) from Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Agra. Also passed Post Graduate Diploma in Computer Applications from Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli. She has 13 years of teaching experience at Women's Christian College, Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu.

A. Johnson Navaraj is 44 years and is a Post Graduate in Library and Information Science from Annamalai University. He is also a Post Graduate and M.Phil in Public Administration. He has 17 years of experience as Librarian in Government Polytechnic colleges. At present he is working as Librarian at Govt. Polytechnic College, Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu.

